

IMMEDIATE

* ~~SECRET~~ *

1. FLYING ACTIVITY THIS DATE:

- 1) 56ARRS 1 SORTIE FOR 2.0 HOURS.
- 2) 23TASS 3 SORTIES FOR 11.6 HOURS.
- 3) 16SOS 1 SORTIE FOR 2.2 HOURS.
- 4) 8TFW 1 SORTIE FOR 0.8 HOURS.

2. SAVES DATA THIS DATE: NO SAVES THIS DATE/JM

3. FUTURE PLANS:

- 1) CONTINUE VISUAL SEARCH, ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE, AND PHOTO RECCE OF OBJECTIVE AREA.
- 2) SAR FORCES AVAILABLE FOR 05 FEB 73:

A) 4 HH53 40ARRS

B) 2 HC130P 56ARRS

C) 6 A7 354TFW

D) NUMEROUS FACS FOR VISUAL SEARCH.D

4. SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS:

- 1) 40ARRS/RCC (JACK) WAS NOTIFIED BY 7AF/TACC/JRCC JOKER/SAT 1915Z THAT BARON 52 (EC47) HAD NOT CHECKED IN OR HIS 1900Z OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORT. LAST POSITION AS A RADAR PLOT FROM LION CRP AT 1830Z AT 1452N 10643E.

AGE 4 RUMOREAD0853 ~~SECRET~~

2) RADIO OR RADAR CONTACT AFTER THAT TIME. AT 1915Z TWO WL FAC'S (F4) WERE DIVERTED TO AREA TO PERFORM COMMUNICATIONS SEARCH. ALSO BARON 52 (EC47) IN THE AREA CONDUCTED EXTENSIVE COMM SEARCH WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS.

3) FIRST LIGHT FACS WERE SENT TO AREA TO PERFORM VISUAL SEARCH. SEARCH PATTERN WAS ESTABLISHED IN 10KM (5.5NM) RIDS FROM LAST KNOWN POSITION. SEARCH IS IN PROGRESS

THIS TIME WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS. EXPECT PROGRESS REPORT AT END OF TODAY'S ACTIVITY.

5) AREA SEARCHED:

1) NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.

2) SEARCH AREA: 10 KILOMETERS (5.5NM) SQUARES

BEGINNING AT X89030 (1444N 10644E) AND PROCEEDING NORTH

AND EAST FROM THAT POSITION. SQUARES ARE IDENTIFIED AS

ALLOWS: BLOCK G-1 AT X89030 TO Y80030 TO Y80040 TO

Y8040. SQUARE F-1 IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF G-1, E-1

NORTH OF F-1 ETC. SQUARE G-2 DIRECTLY EAST OF G-1, G-3

ST OF G-2. ETC

3) K-21 ASSUMED AMC DUTIES AT 050232Z.

4) NO AERIAL REFUELINGS WERE ACCOMPLISHED THIS

BE 5 RUMOREAD0853

TE IN SUPPORT OF MISSION.

5) NO AUXILIARY SAR EQUIPMENT WAS USED THIS DATE IN

REPORT OF MISSION.

31 DEC 81

IMMEDIATE

0853

0853

* ~~SECRET~~ *

3ARRGP/IRCC
APO SF 96310

DATE: 9 Feb 73

MISSION NUMBER: 012

FLIGHT DESIGNATION: Jolly Green 60

MISSION OBJECTIVE: Rescue & Recovery of Crewmembers of Baron 52

LOCATION: 058/63/82

SAVES: None

1. SUMMARY OF SAR ACTIONS: On 9 Feb 73 Jolly Green 71 and 60 were launched at 1050L to recover the bodies of 8 crewman from Baron 52, an AC-47 downed in Eastern Laos, position 058/63/82. The flight was uneventful until we reached a point E, 042/93/82. At this time we were at 9500 MSL and received activity lights and launch lights on KMAW gear of all aircraft. Evasive actions were taken with no problems encountered. Both aircraft arrived at the SAR area at 1320L. JG 71 held 5 miles north while JG 60 proceeded to the location of Baron 52. JG 60 lowered 3 PJ's plus a technician to the crashed aircraft to recover bodies and get positive identification on the aircraft. The aircraft appeared to have crashed nearly vertically and upside down. Both wings were sheared off and the fuselage was completely gutted by flames. The only portion left intact was the tail. After about 45 minutes in the hover, JG 60 recovered two of the PJ's and then because of fuel shortage, egressed the area. JG 71 then proceeded to the area and picked up the 2 remaining men. Egress for both aircraft was accomplished with no problem, and both aircraft recovered at NKP at 1600L. The PJ's recovered the upper portion of one body and positively determined that all crewmembers had perished. A large piece of metal, bearing the aircraft number 636 positively identified the aircraft as Baron 52.

Crewmembers of JG 71 High.

Capt Shapiro, Richard D. _____
1Lt Houk, Jason H. _____
SSgt Cross, Ronald A. _____
TSgt Salome, Charles F. _____
Sgt Moreno, Ralph R. _____
SSgt Johnson, Cdey L. _____

Richard D. Shapiro

RICHARD D. SHAPIRO, Capt, USAF
Aircraft Commander

Crewmembers of JG 60 Low.

Maj Robert D. Furman _____
1Lt Steven H. Van Jaymond _____
SSgt Cayetano, Pina, _____
Sgt Robert B. Johnson _____
TSgt Harwell P. Quillian Jr _____
Sgt Dennis C. Williamson, _____
Sgt Melvin A. Baumgardner _____

Robert D. Furman
ROBERT D. FURMAN, Major, USAF
Aircraft Commander

Reviewed by DPMO
IAW 50 USC 435 Note & DOD 5400.7-R
Date 05 MAY 1998 Initials: *AKD*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classified by Classification:
Guide for SEA Ops SUB TO GL
OF EXEC OR 11652 AJFOMTCL
DWINGRDED AT 2 YR INTERVL
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 DEC 79

JAN 24 '97 1:52AM

~~TOP SECRET~~

Previously
Redacted by

Original

0392200

P 082400Z FEB 73
FM DIRNSA
TO NSA
ZEM

XXMM
ENR07007300
AGENCY SOUTHEAST ASIA
XXCC

SUMMARY

3/00/3799-73

NATIONAL SECURITY

VII.

B. GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS LAOS CONCERN OVER
THE MOVEMENT OF FOUR CAPTURED FLIERS OF UNKNOWN NATIONALITY WAS EXPRESSED
5 FEBRUARY AN UNIDENTIFIED GROUP 2106

ELEMENT. THE FLIERS WERE TO BE TRANSFERRED
FROM 6446, PROBABLY A REFERENCE TO KM 44 (XD 495254, 16-38N 106-23E) ON
ROUTE 914 TO 693, PROBABLY A REFERENCE TO KM 93 (XD 549585, 16-43N 106-27E) ON
ROUTE 1032. THE FLIERS ARE PROBABLY EN ROUTE TO THE BT 9 AREA, SINCE TWO
UNIDENTIFIED PERSONALITIES AT BT 9 WERE TO BE CONTACTED ABOUT THEIR MOVEMENT.

NNNN

~~SECRET~~) XXMM

~~TOP SECRET~~

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IAW 50 USC 435 Note & DOD 5400.7-R
Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: RLD

RECORD-ID
NAME
SERNO
SERVICE
COUNTRY
NATIONALITY
CREW

= B202
= BOLLINGER ARTHUR R
=
= AF
= LA
= US
= SPITZ GEORGE R
PRIMM SJ
BERNHARDT RE
BRANDENBURG D
MELTON TM
MATEJOV JA
CRESSMAN PR

DATE-OF-CHANGE = 730207
LOSS-RANK = 03
INCIDENT-DATE = 730205
STATUS = MM
ACFT = EC47

(b)(6)

~~SECRET * WORKING COPY *~~
~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM SENSITIVE~~ *

024018

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Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: RLD

~~SECRET~~

Redacted

(b)(1) 1.6 (1)

P 052335Z FEB 73

TO

~~SECRET~~

MOVEMENT OF PRISONERS,

GROUP HAS FOUR PIRATES

FROM 44 TO 93 THEY ARE GOING
ALONG THE ROAD, THEY ARE HAVING DIFFICULTIES MOVING

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Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: *PKS*

JAN 24 '97 08:50AM

~~SECRET~~

136633

0 050638Z FEB 73
FM
TO
ZEM

~~SECRET~~

XXMM 73036

2 186-73

050624Z FEB 73

SHOOTDOWN OF AN UNID ACFT
XXCC

TAC INFO PASEP

AT APPROX 050638Z FEB 73, SHOOTDOWN OF AN UNID
ACFT. COMMENTS, THE TYPE AND NATIONALITY OF THE ACFT IS UNKNOWN.
CREW STATUS OR DATE AND LOCATION OF THE SHOOTDOWN. THIS REPORT
BASED ON PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS. HNNH

only plane
down this date
was Baron 52
Ref 1983

~~SECRET~~

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Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: *PKS*

originator
relocated

~~SECRET~~

0 2501 2501 2501 2501

TO

~~SECRET~~

IS HOLDING FOUR PILOTS CAPTIVE AND THE GROUP IS REQUESTING
ORDERS CONCERNING WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

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IAW 50 USC 435 Note & DOD 5400.7-R
Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: *RWD*



DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20340

ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION ON THE LOSS OF EC-47Q BARON 52

LOSS INCIDENT

The EC-47Q, call sign Baron 52, and its eight crew members were lost over Laos on 5 February 1973. Four days later a search team inspected the wreckage and located the remains of four crew members. Two of the remains were in the pilot and co-pilot positions. The third was in the engineer's compartment, and the team was able to recover a portion of this body, which was identified as the other co-pilot. The fourth body was near the engineer's compartment. Normally in this type of aircraft there are two positions immediately behind the engineer's compartment. One of these two positions would have been occupied by SSgt Todd M. Melton and the other by either Sgt Joseph A. Matejov or SSgt Peter R. Cressman. Due to physical and time constraints and hostile forces in the area, the team was not able to lift the fuselage to search for additional remains.

The search team also found what appeared to be anti-aircraft artillery shrapnel holes in parts of the wreckage. They found no evidence that the crew were preparing to bail out when the plane crashed; and it did not appear that the aircraft attempted a controlled crash landing. The disposition of the wreckage and other features of the crash site (e.g., absence of skid marks) indicated the aircraft had plunged nearly vertically to earth, bounced once, landed upside down and burned.

Although operating outside the range of ground radar stations during most of its mission, Baron 52 had frequent radio contact with other aircraft in the area. For example, the commander made routine half hourly contacts with, and reported all unusual occurrences to, Moon Beam Airborne Command and Control Center, and also had radio contact with Spectre 20, an AC-130 gunship working in the same area. The electronics warfare crew members also used separate communications equipment to maintain contact with another EC-47, Baron 62, flying in the same general area. The last reported position of Baron 52 was about 8-10 minutes flying time from the crash site.

COMMANDER'S DETERMINATION

Following a review of facts associated with the crash, the Commander, 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, in coordination with the Commander, 56th Special Operations Wing, recommended that the status of the crew members be changed

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1961 - 1986

to killed-in-action. The next-of-kin were informed of the status change and the facts supporting the decision in a series of letters dated between 24 February and 17 April 1973, which summarized the events of Baron 52's last mission and the evidence obtained by the search team. The commander added that in view of the capabilities of the radio communications equipment, Baron 52's frequent contacts with other aircraft, and the intensive training of the crew, in case of emergency at least one of the crew would have instinctively used the radios unless the aircraft crashed as a result of some catastrophic incident that immediately and completely incapacitated the crew members. Having reviewed the available facts, the field commanders reported that they believed "there was no reasonable doubt that all the members of the crew of Baron 52 were killed in the crash."

INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

Although the observations of the search team and other facts constituted what the field commander believed to be compelling evidence that none of the crew members survived, four intelligence reports, portions of which were declassified for release to the next-of-kin, led others to speculate that the four electronics specialists could have survived. Two of the documents were dated 5 February 1973, another 17 February 1973, and the fourth 2 May 1973. Through a longstanding misinterpretation of these sanitized documents an erroneous impression of survivors was preserved. Yet in fact, the four reports do not relate to the loss of the EC-47Q.

- The initial 5 February report originated in the area of Vinh, North Vietnam, over 240 miles by road north of the EC-47Q crashsite. In that report, which was issued as an unevaluated report as soon as the information was acquired, a North Vietnamese unit near Vinh is said to be holding four prisoners who are not further identified.
- The later 5 February report, based on and issued after a review of the information in the earlier 5 February report, provides no additional insights into the origin or identity of the prisoners.
- The 17 February document is reflective of an enemy unit having downed an aircraft in the area immediately south of the Demilitarized Zone which separated North and South Vietnam, and as such does not relate to the EC-47Q or its crew.
- The 2 May report is yet another analyst's interpretation of the 5 February reporting and is neither new information nor a new report. DIA's review of the evidence shows that the analyst who prepared the

2 May report made a number of arbitrary and erroneous assumptions and speculative assertions in an attempt to infer that the 5 February information originated from a location much closer to the EC-47Q crashsite and that some of the crew survived. The 2 May report therefore actually provides no more conclusive information than the original 5 February report did; however, the unwarranted personal speculation tends to draw attention away from this fact.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the four documents cited above were never conclusively correlated to crew members of Baron 52. The documents initially were entered into the files of the crew members only because the information was acquired shortly after Baron 52 became missing, and it was anticipated that future reporting might permit DIA analysts to make a definitive correlation to the Baron 52 incident. No such reporting was ever received. It is further emphasized that following the loss of Baron 52 none of its crew was ever seen alive, and there is no intelligence whatsoever which would indicate any of the crew survived the incident of loss.

Case #1983-0-01 thru 07

NARRATIVE

On 5 February 1973, an EC47 aircraft, tail number 43-58636, with eight personnel on board, disappeared while flying over Saravane Province, Laos. On 7 February 1973, the crash site of this aircraft was located in the vicinity of coordinates YC 143 291. Pararescuemen were lowered by jungle penetrator to investigate the burned wreckage. They reported that three of four charred remains were observed in the wreckage but were able to recover only one set which was later identified as one of the missing crew. Due to the possibility that some of the crewmembers may have parachuted to safety prior to the crash, aerial searches were conducted in the area and emergency radio channels monitored, but no trace of any other crewmember could be found.

Data pertaining to these seven individuals are as follows:

Name: Spitz, George Ross

Rank: Captain, US Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (u)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meters

Weight: 79.2

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Reviewed by DPMO
IAW 50 USC 435 Note & DOD 5400.7-R
Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: PRD

165

Case #1983-0-01 thru 07

Name: Bollinger, Authur Ray

Rank: Captain, US Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (u)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meter

Weight: 83.8 Kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Melton, Todd Michael

Rank: SSGT, US Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (u)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meters

Weight: 90.6 Kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Primm, Severo James III

Rank: 2nd Lt, US Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (u)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.80 meters

Weight: 72.4 Kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Green

166

Case #1983-0-01 thru 07

Name: Cressman, Peter Richard

Rank: SGT, US Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (u)(c)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.77 meters

Weight: 77.0 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Matejov, Joseph Andrew

Rank: SGT, US Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (u)(c)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meters

Weight: 74.7 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Brandenburg, Dale

Rank: SGT, US Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.77 meters

Weight: 65.6 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

~~SECRET~~
~~NOFORN~~

PAGE 1

0002 0003

B201 BERNHARDT, ROBERT E

B202 BOLLINGER, ARTHUR R

B203 BRANDENBURG, DALE

C176 CRESSMAN, PETER R

M194 MATEJOV, JOSEPH A

M195 MELTON, TODD M

P130 PRIMM, SEVERO J III

S221 SPITZ, GEORGE R

0008 0026 0010

730205 EC47 LA

730205 EC47Q LA

730205 EC47Q LA

730205 EC47Q LA

730205 EC47Q LA

730205 EC47Q LA

730205 EC47Q LA

730205 EC47Q LA

Declassified by
another agency.

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Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: *AKD*

167

S27002

~~SECRET~~
~~NOFORN~~

168

Bollinger file

HOLD

51

1 cy
Niang
add to
Bernhardt
file

Subject: US PWs Captured After Vietnam Cease-Fire (U)

- For SSO Clark: insure BG R. Ogan, USAF, sees
- For SSO COMUSMACV: insure appropriately cleared member of FPJMC PW subcommittee, sees
- For SSO Kelly: pass to Col A. W. Gratch, USAF, casualty Division, Randolph AFB

1. (U) The following is provided for your information.

2. ~~(S)~~ The most recent information on the PW status of LCDR P. A. Kientzler, USN, is being forwarded through non-SSO channels. This message also contains a summary of the available information on his crewmember, CDR H. H. Hall and on the USAF OV-10A crew (Capt G. W. Morris and Lt M. A. Peterson) that was ^{attempting} attempting to LCDR Kientzler and CDR Hall.

3. ~~(S/ST)~~ There is information that the North Vietnamese may be holding four other Americans besides LCDR Kientzler, this information is summarized as follows:

a. On 5 February 1973 an AF EC-47 failed to return to friendly control and the crewmembers were declared MIA in Laos at time of estimated fuel exhaustion.

b. Intercept of NVA communications of 5 February indicates four "pirate pilots" had been captured by Group 217/210 (unlocated but possibly in vicinity of Vinh). The word "pirate" usually refers to Americans. In this case, the word "pilots" is a loose translation of a Vietnamese word that might connote "crewmembers" more so than pilots. This same, used for downed B-52 crewmembers, Vietnamese

word has been indicating the captives were crewmembers of a larger aircraft.

c. Wreckage of the EC-47 was located in Southern Laos. Remains (head and torso) of the Co-pilot, 1st Lt Robert E. Bernhardt, were recovered and positively identified. He was subsequently declared KIA. Other remains were burned and decomposed beyond recognition. Further rescue efforts could not be made due to the presence of hostile forces in the area. The other seven crewmembers, also listed as KIA, were:

Capt George R. Spitz

2nd Lt Severo J. Primm

Capt Arthur R. Bollinger

Sgt Dale Brandenburg

Sgt Todd M. Melton

Sgt Joseph A. Matejov

Sgt Peter R. Cressman

d. The possibility exists that four members of the EC-47 may have parachuted from the aircraft prior to impact.

3. ~~(S/ST)~~ There has been no subsequent COMINT regarding the alleged capture of the "four pirate pilots".

Previously redacted/declassified
by Another Agency.

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Date: 05 MAY 1998 Initials: AKD

169

170

CASE #1983-0-01 thru 07

NARRATIVE

On 4 February 1973, an EC47 aircraft, tail number 43-48636, with eight personnel on board, disappeared while flying over Saravane Province, Laos. On 7 February 1973, the crash site of this aircraft was located in the vicinity of coordinates YC 143 291. Pararescuemen were lowered by jungle penetrator to investigate the burned wreckage. They reported that three or four charred remains were observed in the wreckage but were able to recover only one set which was later identified as one of the missing crew. Due to the possibility that some of the crewmembers may have parachuted to safety prior to the crash, aerial searches were conducted in the area and emergency radio channels monitored, but no trace of any other crewmember could be found.

Data pertaining to these seven individuals are as follows:

Name: Spitz, George Ross

Rank: Capt, U.S. Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meters

Weight: 79.2 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

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IAW 50 USC 435 Note & DOD 5400.7-R
Date 5 MAY 1990 Initials: *AKS*

171

CASE #1983-0-01 thru 07

Name: Bollinger, Arthur Ray

Rank: Capt, U.S. Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meters

Weight: 83.8 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Melton, Todd Michael

Rank: SSgt, U.S. Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meters

Weight: 90.6 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Primm, Severo James III

Rank: 2nd Lt, U.S. Air Force

Date of Birth: _____ (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.80 meters

Weight: 72.4 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Green

172

Name: Cressman, Peter Richard

Rank: Sgt, U.S. Air Force

Date of Birth: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.77 meters

Weight: 77.0 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Matejov, Joseph Andrew

Rank: Sgt, U.S. Air Force

Date of Birth: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.85 meters

Weight: 74.7 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Name: Brandenburg, Dale

Rank: Sgt, U.S. Air Force

Date of Birth: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

Race: Caucasian

Height: 1.77 meters

Weight: 65.6 kilos

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

Josh Levin

(b)(6)

Capt. Ray Vohden
c/o MIA/POW Affairs
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

Dear Capt. Vohden:

Persuant to my request of last week, I would like to obtain information on the crash of an Air Force EC-47 Q over Laos, the date of February 5, 1973.

It is known that such an aircraft was shot down with eight persons aboard. These men were: Lt. Robert Bernhardt, E-4 Dale Bradenberg, E-4 Joseph Matejov, E-4 Peter Cressman, Lt. Severo Primim, E-5 Todd Melton, Capt. Arthur Bollinger, and Capt. George Spitz. The body of Lt. Bernhardt was returned to the U.S. All men were declared dead.

It has come to my attention that as many as ^{four} six men were known to be captured, or at the very least not definitely dead. This fact has not been released publicly up until now.

I would like to obtain a detailed account of the circumstances behind the move to declare these men dead, and information about the known status of these men at the time of the crash. Information concerning how U.S. data on these men was obtained (e.g. intercepts) would be appreciated as well.

Please do all you can to assist me in my research.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Josh Levin